

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, comprising:  
  
creating a unique identifier specifying the format of the data element;  
  
inserting the unique identifier as part of the data element; and  
  
transmitting the data element and unique identifier.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein creating the unique identifier further comprises producing a canonical representation.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein creating the unique identifier further comprises hashing the canonical representation to produce the unique identifier.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with a fixed size.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with an indication of a recursion.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes determining whether the expected form includes a structure or a type of data in the data element.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the data element includes transmitting the data element through the Internet.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the data element includes transmitting the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.

10. A method for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, comprising:

receiving the data element;

extracting a unique identifier that specifies the format of the data element; and

processing the data using the unique identifier.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier of a fixed size.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier indicating a recursion.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein processing the unique identifier includes determining whether the expected form comprises a structure.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein processing the unique identifier includes determining whether the expected form comprises a type of data.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein processing the unique identifier includes:

creating a second identifier based on an expected format of the data element;  
and  
comparing the unique identifier and the second identifier.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein receiving the data element includes receiving the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.

18. A system for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, comprising:

a component for creating a unique identifier specifying the format of the data element;

a component for inserting the unique identifier as part of the data element; and

a component for transmitting the data element and unique identifier.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for producing a canonical representation.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for hashing the canonical representation to produce the unique identifier.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for creating the unique identifier with a fixed size.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for creating the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.

23. The system of claim 18, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for creating the unique identifier with an indication of a recursion.

24. The system of claim 18, wherein the component for creating the unique identifier is further configured for determining whether the expected form includes a structure or a type of data in the data element.

25. The system of claim 18, wherein the component for transmitting the data element is further configured for transmitting the data element through the Internet.

26. The system of claim 18, wherein the component for transmitting the data element is further configured for transmitting the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.

27. A system for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, comprising:

a component for receiving the data element;

a component for extracting a unique identifier that specifies the format of the data element; and

a component for processing the data using the unique identifier.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for receiving the unique identifier is further configured for receiving the unique identifier of a fixed size.

29. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for receiving the unique identifier is further configured for receiving the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.

30. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for receiving the unique identifier is further configured for receiving the unique identifier indicating a recursion.

31. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for processing the unique identifier is further configured for determining whether the expected form comprises a structure.

32. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for processing the unique identifier is further configured for determining whether the expected form comprises a type of data.

33. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for processing the unique identifier is further configured for:

creating a second identifier based on an expected format of the data element;  
and  
comparing the unique identifier and the second identifier.

34. The system of claim 27, wherein the component for receiving the data element is further configured for receiving the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.



35. A computer-readable medium on which is stored a set of instructions for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, which when executed perform stages comprising:

creating a unique identifier specifying the format of the data element;  
inserting the unique identifier as part of the data element; and  
transmitting the data element and unique identifier.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein creating the unique identifier further comprises producing a canonical representation.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 36, wherein creating the unique identifier further comprises hashing the canonical representation to produce the unique identifier.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with a fixed size.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.

40. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes creating the unique identifier with an indication of a recursion.

41. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein creating the unique identifier further includes determining whether the expected form includes a structure or a type of data in the data element.

42. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein transmitting the data element includes transmitting the data element through the Internet.

43. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein transmitting the data element includes transmitting the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.

44. A computer-readable medium on which is stored a set of instructions for communicating a data element in a way that does not identify the format of the element, which when executed perform stages comprising:

receiving the data element;

extracting a unique identifier that specifies the format of the data element; and

processing the data using the unique identifier.

45. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier of a fixed size.

46. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier with a fixed size of sixteen bytes.

47. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein receiving the unique identifier further comprises receiving the unique identifier indicating a recursion.

48. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein processing the unique identifier includes determining whether the expected form comprises a structure.

49. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein processing the unique identifier includes determining whether the expected form comprises a type of data.

50. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein processing the unique identifier includes:

creating a second identifier based on an expected format of the data element;  
and  
comparing the unique identifier and the second identifier.

51. The computer-readable medium of claim 44, wherein receiving the data element includes receiving the data element in the ASN.1 PER standard format.